

VZCZCXYZ0015
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHEG #0166/01 0281457
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 281455Z JAN 10
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0073
INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO

UNCLAS CAIRO 000166

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
DEPT FOR NEA/ELA, NEA/RA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT: Ministry of Health to Provide Assistance to Iraq

REF: 09 CAIRO 2194

11. (SBU) Key Points:

--The Ministry of Health is expanding its medical cooperation with Iraqi and has signed agreements to allow sick Iraqis to seek treatment at Egyptian facilities and to offer training opportunities for Iraqi doctors.

--The Ministry is reviewing an Iraqi request to design and build hospitals in Iraq but has already begun discussions to gauge Egyptian construction companies' interest.

12. (SBU) Econoff met with Ministry of Health (MoH) Senior Advisor for International Cooperation and Agreement Affairs Mokhtar Warida on January 27 to discuss Egypt's expanded health assistance programs for the Iraqi Ministry of Health. According to Warida - a member of Health Minister Hatem El-Gabaly's cabinet, MoH assistance for Iraq will focus on three key areas: increased medical access to Egyptian medical facilities for Iraqi patients, training, and hospital construction. Warida noted that MoH only recently signed agreements with the Iraqi Health Ministry. This new cooperation is part of the GoE-GoI joint committee (Ref A).

Medical Treatment

13. (SBU) Under a January 2010, Iraqis with "serious medical conditions" will be permitted to travel to Egypt to seek treatment at government hospitals. Warida stated that this development came at the formal request of the Iraqi government and that Egypt was prepared to ease visa and other travel restrictions for Iraqi patients. Emphasizing that Iraqis would pay "the same prices as Egyptians, Warida said that medical bills are "significantly more expensive" for other foreigners than for Egyptians. He also explained that as a result of this new agreement, MoH has established a team dedicated solely to assisting Iraqis arriving for medical treatment.

Family Medicine Training Programs

14. (SBU) Warida noted MoH plans to offer new training programs for Iraqi doctors specializing in family medicine. He explained that under an October 2009 protocol, Iraqi doctors would train for 3-6 months at MoH's National Training Center and then return to Iraq to

continue their medical practice. Warida said that Egypt is already collaborating with doctors from Libya and Saudi Arabia through similar programs and looks forward to working with Iraqi professionals.

Hospital Construction

15. (SBU) MoH is considering an Iraqi request to design and construct hospitals, Warida said, and cautioned that this proposal is currently under review. MoH has held preliminary conversations with Orascom Construction Industries, one of Egypt's largest firms, about participating in this program and plans to meet with other local companies to determine their interest. Warida noted that if MoH elects to take part, it would focus on building hospitals with 200 or more beds but was unclear as to where in Iraq it would work. He believed that the Iraqi government has offered an in-kind payment of oil for any hospital construction work, with no currency transfer to Egypt.

16. (SBU) Comment: This is the first occasion MoH has collaborated with the Iraqi Health Ministry and is notable for Egypt's potential entry into Iraq to participate in the hospital construction plan. In previous meetings, El-Gabaly has expressed his desire to build a Cairo-based medical center of excellence - serving the Middle East

and African countries - and this new partnership appears to be part of a broader plan to position Egypt as the regional focal point for health policies and programs.
SCOBey